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As a general rule, all ascending passages should increase, and descending passages decrease in loudness of tone.

Reiterated or insisting passages should increase in loudness, unless the repetition is intended as an echo to the original phrase.

All syncopated, suspended notes, and those foreign to a chord, should be emphasised, and their resolutions clearly defined.

In the execution of rapid passages, a good singer should never let any signs of *hurry* be evident, and must impart life and energy to very slow movements by diversified and graduated tones.

Every appearance of effort or exhaustion should be avoided, that the minds of an audience may remain in a state of pleasurable security rather than of surprise or suspense.

Singers should never debase their own standard of taste to gain popularity; if their own judgment pronounce a composition to be worthless and unmeaning, they should, if possible, decline to perform it. It is the duty of every artiste to form and elevate musical taste, and the public is much more intelligent than some musicians suppose. It is true that much applause is bestowed upon mere mechanical execution, but this expression of delight is temporary, and very different from the placid, but perfect enjoyment experienced by an audience appreciating the worthy performance of some classical work, always heard with renewed pleasure. The dignity of Art, and of those devoted to it, will ever be respected, unless degraded by artistes themselves.

THE HANDEL COMMEMORATION FESTIVAL.

A PROGRAMME of the arrangements for the forthcoming Handel Festival has been issued by the Directors of the Crystal Palace. The preliminary Festival of 1857 enabled the promoters of it to ascertain the amount of duly-qualified assistance, both from professors and from amateurs, which might be relied upon; and also to settle what arrangements and combinations of so unprecedented a number of musicians, would conduce to the most efficient performance of the choral works of the great master. It is stated that the central transept of the Crystal Palace, which may for this purpose be considered as a great music hall, is 260 feet long by 216 feet wide, and contains an area of 77,760 square feet, exclusive of several tiers of galleries. At the Festival of 1857, it was discovered that the mass of performers did not produce the overpowering sound anticipated; and that, notwithstanding the grandeur of the choruses, the tone did not completely fill the area of the great transept, and might have been still further augmented with advantage. Upon these considerations, it is determined that the orchestra shall be extended at the sides and in the front, so that the number of performers will fall little short of 4000. There will be a solid boarded enclosure running round the entire back of the orchestra and organ, and a roof of repellant material will join the enclosure, and extend forward beyond the line of the conductor's seat. A contrivance for assisting the voices of the solo vocalists is also in preparation, and experiments which have been made lead to the anticipation of the most satisfactory results from the additions. The size of the orchestra will now be 216 feet—that is, the full width of the transept, with a central depth from front to back of about 100 feet. Its extent will be more clearly appreciated when it is stated that the width is ex-

actly double the diameter of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, and that the area, which is 16,016 square feet, exceeds the combined orchestras of Westminster Abbey and York Minster as arranged for the festivals, the Birmingham Town Hall, St. George's Hall, Bradford, the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, and some other smaller orchestras. The diagram, which will be found in p. 83, will fully illustrate these comparative dimensions. From the arrangements in progress, every confidence is felt that the acoustic improvements will result in greatly-increased concentration and unity of tone. At the same time, the appearance of the orchestra will be materially improved, by its more perfect proportions, and by the decorations which it is proposed to adopt. Since the last festival performance at the Crystal Palace, great pains have been taken by the Sacred Harmonic Society to keep together the large mass of chorus-singers forming the Metropolitan Chorus, and they have greatly improved with regular rehearsals. After much deliberation, it has been decided that three performances shall take place, on the 20th, 22nd, and 24th of June, and that the music will be, on the first day, the *Messiah*; the second day, the *Dettingen Te Deum*, and a selection, chiefly choruses, from *Saul*, *Samson*, *Belshazzar*, *Judas Maccabæus*, and other works. On third day will be given, as last year, the oratorio of *Israel in Egypt*.

MADAME CLARA NOVELLO.—In reply to enquiries made, we learn "it is possible Madame Clara Novello *will* not sing at the Crystal Palace Commemoration of Handel next June."

Reviews.

Moore's Irish Melodies, with New Symphonies and Accompaniments, by M. W. BALFE. J. Alfred Novello, Dean Street, Soho.

HAD Sir John Stevenson arranged the airs in Thomas Moore's national work discreetly, it is probable that no rival edition would ever have been projected. The attention of the public has been long directed to the inappropriate manner (to use a mild epithet) in which the "Irish Melodies" have been set. Not long since, in our notice of the "People's Edition," we had occasion to point out the errors of Sir John Stevenson. That he wrote some pretty tunes—among others, "O then, dearest Ellen, I'll love you no more"—is not to be denied. His education, however, was defective, and his taste was execrable. His attempts at fine writing, in the symphonies to the "Irish Melodies," are puerile in the extreme, besides being often faulty and inappropriate. No doubt, Sir John Stevenson had never seen—or, having seen, never troubled himself about—Haydn's arrangements of the "Scotch Melodies," which might otherwise have served him as models.

The preface to the edition just issued by Mr. Novello, informs us that Mr. Bunting, in the second volume of his book on Irish Music, was the first to call attention to the manner in which the Melodies had been maltreated. Thomas Moore, however, who had little knowledge of music himself, entertained a very great respect for his colleague, and threw the shield so manfully over him, that the public forgave the musician for the sake of the poet. It remained for our own days to show Sir John in his proper colours. Enjoying a certain reputation in his own country, about the grounds of which no one took the trouble to inquire, with engaging social qualities, and clever to boot, it is not singular that his claims were undisputed at a period when real musicians were scarce, and music so little cultivated. In the preface just mentioned, the reader will find a full statement of the reasons that induced the publisher to issue the present edition of the "Irish Melodies."

Of Mr. Balfe's share of the work we are bound to speak in terms of hearty praise. Although the arrangement of simple ballads does not necessarily imply any vast amount

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